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ECONOMICS
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For Immediate Release

Census Bureau Gets Down to Business: Millions of Firms to Be Counted in 2002 Economic Census

The Commerce Department's Census Bureau will send questionnaires to more than 5 million businesses in December, launching the 2002 Economic Census, which Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has called, "indispensable to understanding America's economy." The Economic Census, taken every five years, "ensures the accuracy of the statistics we rely on for sound economic policy and for successful business planning," said Greenspan.

"The Economic Census produces our most widely used business statistics," said Kathleen B. Cooper, Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs. "It is the primary benchmark for measurement of 96 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the foundation for most of our economic indicators."

The Economic Census also provides reports on hundreds of industries and data for states, counties and places – even some for ZIP Codes.

Businesses, communities, and governments use Economic Census data for planning and market development. Reports and statistics are published on the Census Bureau's Internet site <www.census.gov>.

Completed forms are due at the Census Bureau by February 12, 2003. Businesses that receive a form are required by law (Title 13, U.S. Code) to respond.

Several initiatives will be used to make it easier for businesses to complete their census forms. For the first time, about 3.5 million locations will be able to file their forms electronically. The Census Bureau also has an Internet help site for businesses <www.census.gov/econhelp>.

A toll-free "help line" (1-800-233-6136) will be answered by Census Bureau employees during business hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m., EST, Monday through Friday).

The 2002 Economic Census features many "firsts," including:

- ◆ The first official measure of e-commerce for all industries
- ◆ New information on changing business supply-chain functions
- ◆ The first information on leased employees in businesses
- ◆ Initial use of the North American Product Classification System for products in about 85 service industries
- ◆ Expanded information on purchased services and classes of customers

Data covering calendar year 2002 will be collected and processed during 2003, and the first data will be released beginning in early 2004. Ultimately, the Economic Census will yield over 1,600 data products, with information on more than 1,000 industries and over 50,000 geographic areas.

2002 Economic Census
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